

**Daley to D.C.: Be brave, bold** October 20th, 2001

Chicago Sun-Times

BYLINE: Fran Spielman CITY HALL REPORTER -- Chicago Sun-Times

**BODY:**

Mayor Daley on Friday decried the "bunker mentality" that prompted the U.S. House of Representatives to adjourn in response to the anthrax scare, saying it sent a chilling message to an American public being urged to resume normal life.

"The bunker mentality of Washington sends a very difficult message across the country about getting back to normalcy," the mayor said. "That mentality--'City of Fear,' some of the headlines were saying--that does scare people all across the country."

Echoing the comments of Homeland Security Chief Tom Ridge, Daley noted that "hundreds of millions of pounds of mail" are delivered every day without a trace of anthrax.

"Do you stop all the packages from being delivered? You'll destroy the economy overnight. You'll put another 100,000 or 200,000 people out of work," the mayor said.

Instead of high-tailing it out of town, House members should rush back to Washington and approve a New Deal-style public works program to get the economy moving again, the mayor said.

"That city has to get back moving forward because, as they leave Washington and come back to their congressional districts, people are getting laid off. They see their mother, father, son, daughter and friends being laid off. This has a rippling effect," Daley said.

"Washington has to get back and pass some immediate legislation like FDR did--like Eisenhower did. Infrastructure, building schools, roads, mass transit, water projects, environmental projects, parks, airports. You have to get that money out as quickly as possible. I firmly believe that's more important than a tax cut for some company that just laid off 5,000 or 10,000 people. . . . All those executives who are laying all these people off have not reduced their salaries one penny."

The House of Representatives was closed when more than 30 congressional workers tested positive for exposure to the anthrax bacterium. The Senate, however, remained open. Several members of the Illinois' congressional delegation said shutting down the House was the right thing to do.

"I think everybody needs to take a deep breath and calm down," said Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.). "That may apply to the Congress, but certainly I don't think anyone would want us to do nothing. I think what we did was reasonable."

She said the House finished its business in an orderly fashion before members left. "There was no panic, nobody ran away."

Rep. Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) said the House didn't shut its doors simply to protect its members, but to protect the health of the public that visits congressional buildings and young staffers.

"Congress is full of 21- and 22-year-old young men and women who have come to work for the Congress. They're the ones on the front line who open the mail," he said. "I have to look into the eyes of the parents of these kids who work for me and make sure I've done everything possible to protect their lives."